



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

An electronic newsletter in support of public safety services in Montana

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IM Weekly Highlights



- Construction season is starting to ramp up. The Limestone shelter was installed this week. Installation of the shelter at the VC Pass site is scheduled for next week.
- Roger Smith continues work with the Northern Tier with fleet mapping and code plug development.
- Aviat engineers are in Montana to work with the IM to resolve issues with the microwave management software.
- Lewis & Clark County IT staff is working on the enterprise email server that will provide technicians with real-time alarms for errors that happen on the IM system. Once the server system has gone through a testing period, the IM will add notifications to dispatch centers that will want these notices for system errors that may affect sites in their area.

Call for WBIWG Speakers

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, is hosting this year's Western Border Interoperability Working Group (WBIWG) meeting in Regina, SK on May 11-13. Speaker slots are still available.

If you or someone you know is interested in presenting, please contact Kevin Roche at kevin.roche@gov.sk.ca or call him at (306) 787-9567.



Mark Your Calendars to attend the WBIWG

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Mark your calendars for the 2010 Western Border Interoperability Working Group (WBIWG) meeting in Regina, SK. The meeting will take place on Tuesday, May 11, starting at 7:00 pm, and end on Thurs., May 13 at noon.

WBIWG meetings offer an opportunity for representatives from Western border states and provinces to interact with each other about radio

interoperability issues. This annual get-together provides a platform for federal, state and provincial coordination of public safety communications and technologies with an emphasis on border areas. The group has met every year since 2005.

Information on room reservations will be forthcoming.

IM Funding Sub-Committee

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The IM Funding Sub-Committee covered a wide range of topics at its Wed., March 17, meeting in Billings, including accounting for individual jurisdiction communications site expenditures, different funding models and legislative strategies. Most of its time was spend reviewing the latest draft of the IM Business Plan.

Suggested changes to the IM mission and vision will be addressed at the upcoming Blueprint for Excellence strategic planning session. The concepts of "allowable" and "ad hoc" expenses were also discussed along with ideas for streamlining operations. An operations plan and budget are needed to ensure the IM has resources needed for emergencies to sustain and operate the statewide radio system. An efficient business model will clearly explain how monies will be generated and distributed. Members also discussed cost-recovery models.

The next meeting will be announced.

I-15/90 Consortium Members Kept Informed

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Project Director Dave McPherson brought I-15/90 Corridor Consortium members up to date at the consortium's Thurs., March 18, meeting in Butte. He reported on progress on the XL Heights site and said the IM Audit Committee, which he chairs, has selected a vendor to conduct a financial audit of the IM. He also has secured a storage area for the trunking equipment and microwave dishes needed for the Red Mountain site. In addition, members learned about the upcoming Blueprint for Excellence Strategic Planning Session. Dave also said that Butte-Silver Bow eventually will be a TrESAP, but a short-term solution is being looked at to get the trunking system up and running.

Bob McWilliams, IM Technical Committee (IMTC) Chair, gave an overview of recent IMTC discussions regarding self-quieting frequencies in

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radios, a waiver submittal for the IM to remain on the DES-OFB encryption standard, El-Tech power supply replacements on the Northern Tier, and new IMTC best practices for self-supporting communications tower and concrete pads. He also reported that work is taking place on the list of spare parts, emergency generators and portable towers that need to be purchased with PSIC Strategic Technology Reserve (STR) funds. In addition, Bob gave an update on the Senior Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting that he attended and the likely distribution of DHS FY2010 grant funds. He also gave an account of the IWCE convention last week, and gave members an outline of upcoming construction efforts within the consortium.

Members also were brought up to date on research taking place on cellular telephone companies lease agreements on the Rumsey Mountain site. Wing Spooner, PSSB, gave an update on the IM Funding Sub-Committee meeting. Tom Dunne, Dunne Communications, reviewed a tower drawing for the Red Mountain site and indicated that a combiner will be needed. He also reported that two of his technicians attended Harris-Stratex eclipse radio training and are now Level 3 Certified Microwave Technicians.

The next I-15/90 consortium meeting is scheduled for Thurs., April 15 at the Butte-Silver Bow Chamber of Commerce, 1000 George St., at 10:00 am.

IM Contributes to Local Radio Reliability

By Scott Bradford sbradford@mt.gov

FY2010-11 state appropriation dollars are helping county governments in the eastern part of the state improve radio coverage and upgrade their public safety radio communications capabilities. The Public Safety Services Bureau (PSSB), along with members of the Interoperability Montana (IM) Project and the Eastern Tier consortium, worked diligently during the last session to fund this and other projects in the Eastern Tier. Local jurisdictions are now beginning to receive the fruits of this labor.

Five counties (Custer, Dawson, Garfield, Powder River, and Richland) have



signed award letters agreeing to take ownership of 15 P25 conventional repeaters for internal public safety needs and future interface to the Interoperability Montana system. Several areas targeted for installation currently have limited coverage with existing county radio systems. Other repeaters will replace aged equipment and are targeted as future IM sites. When the IM system is deployed to the area, these radios will serve as conventional interop repeaters.

Per agreement with the IM project, installation of the conventional repeaters will be completed before June 30 of this year.

Upcoming Meetings

- **Mon., March 22**
IM Technical Committee (IMTC)
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
MACo Large Conf. Rm., Lower Level, 2715 Skyway Dr.
- **Tues., March 23**
State Agency Radio Users Task Force
Helena • 9:00 am - 11:00 pm
Old Livestock Building, 1310 E. Lockey Ave.
- **Thurs., March 25**
Big Sky 11 Consortium
Billings • 8:30 am – 10:00 am • Technical Mtg.
• 10:00 am – noon • Consortium Mtg.
Billings Police Dept. Training Center, 4810 Midland Rd.
- **Wed., March 31 (Please Note New Day, Time and Date)**
Eastern Tier Consortium
Glendive • 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Law Enforcement Center
440 Colorado Blvd.
- **Wed., March 31**
Mobile Data Terminal Consortium
Bozeman • 10:00 am – noon
Gallatin County EOC, 219 E Tamarack
- **Thurs., April 1**
IM Funding Sub-Committee Meeting
Billings • 1:00 pm
Billings Police Dept. Training Center, 4810 Midland Rd.
- **Wed., April 14**
South Central Montana Consortium (SCIMC)
Big Timber • 10:00 am – noon
Carnegie Library, 314 McLeod St.
- **Wed. & Thurs. April 21 & 22**
Blueprint for Excellence
Strategic Planning Session – By invitation
MACo Large Conf. Rm., Lower Level, 2715 Skyway Dr.
- **Wed., May 19**
Statewide Interoperable Executive Council (SIEC)
Helena • 10:00 am - 3:00 pm
VisionNet – Location is to be Confirmed